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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes varieties of public library services and programs geared to fulfilling the information needs of older adults, the physically handicapped, the illiterate, ethnic minorities, and others requiring survival information essentials. (FM)

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SERVING CITIZENS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

How Libraries Can Enrich Lives and Fulfill Aspirations for the Elderly and the Handicapped, the Functionally Illiterate, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, The Homebound and Inmates of Correctional Institutions.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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W.N. Seymour

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A background paper for the
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Special Note: Scheduling problems prevented the publication of this background paper until after the White House Conference had taken place. Happily no harm was done, as the subject of special user needs received the greatest attention during the Conference itself and in the resolutions adopted by the delegates, thanks to the presence of many citizen-delegates who could attest to such needs firsthand.

The research material set forth in this paper will be of great value to library planners and administrators as programs are developed to carry out the White House Conference recommendations. Not only does the paper contain many stimulating concepts and ideas; it also can serve to identify libraries that have been doing pioneering work, so that more detailed information can be obtained.

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One of a series of background papers on the changing role of public libraries:

1. Neighborhood Information Service Centers
2. Serving Citizens with Special Needs
3. Career and Employment Information Services
4. Continuing Education Services
5. New Technology for Libraries
6. Strengthening the Library Profession

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INTRODUCTION

More than two hundred years have passed since Thomas Jefferson and his colleagues at Philadelphia asserted as a self-evident truth that "All men are created equal." Ironically, our computer-based, highly industrialized society and proliferating government programs have made equality harder to achieve for many citizens than it was in the simpler setting of the eighteenth century. To realize "equal opportunity" in present-day America, one needs to be able to find where the opportunities are and one must be able to utilize them. This often demands more knowledge, skills and sophistication than some of the most educated citizens possessed two centuries ago.

Increasing numbers of Americans have not attained the high levels of education and skills needed to gain employment and to manage and care for a family. America today faces the distressing reality of *greater* inequality, rather than less, for hundreds of thousands of its citizens.

A number of government and private programs have attempted to bridge the gap between the "advantaged" and the "disadvantaged." Very few have succeeded. The result is that countless Americans live in worlds of ignorance and poverty.

Public libraries are the logical agencies to try to deal with this paradox. They have decentralized networks of branches to serve local communities; librarians professionally trained in the skills of selecting, organizing and interpreting the resources of information and knowledge; and the experience and ability to serve the special needs of the individual. Libraries can provide across-the-board information and referral services, can sponsor literacy tutoring programs and can adapt to particular wants in order to place their services at the disposal of people who need their stored information and knowledge. These are the people whose access to such information and knowledge is inhibited by economic, social and cultural barriers; low reading skills;

deafness; poor eyesight; physical frailty; mental illness; and/or confinement in institutions or at home.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the beginnings of a new and growing concern for social responsibility by librarians. It was a consciousness fueled by bus boycotts and freedom rides, by strikes in the lettuce fields and vineyards of California, by riots at Attica prison and the Tombs, by the seizure of the tiny village of Wounded Knee, by the formation of the Gray Panthers and by the sit-in of the handicapped in Washington, D.C.

Studies of library users consistently showed a service limited to white, middle-class people. Librarians also wanted to reach the unserved members of their communities—the large minorities of disadvantaged Blacks, Hispanics, Appalachian whites and Native Americans; the elderly; the incarcerated; and the handicapped.

Many of the experimental programs of the 1960s, largely funded through federal Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) grants, were attempts to introduce these groups to traditional library services. Their aim was to induce the disadvantaged to conform with society as they found it instead of preparing the disadvantaged to initiate and cope with changes in society. Although these programs were doomed to failure, certain important perceptions were gained from these experiences. Librarians became aware of the clear need to recruit professionals from the ranks of minority or disadvantaged populations; to find avenues to "let the people in"; and to be alert to changing populations and new community problems. Librarians developed new antennae—they learned to become conscious of the ways in which they turned people off; they learned to go into the community and to establish contact with people who had never set foot in a library; and, especially, they began to work closely with other human service organizations to improve the quality of life in their communities.

"Within the disadvantaged community itself the dominant means of getting information is by asking a friend, someone who is trusted," wrote Monteria Hightower. "The library's charge should be to become that friend."

The development of information and referral services, job information services and continuing education services (dis-

cussed at length in three other papers in this series) have been the first step in becoming that "friend." They are ways of packaging some practically useful segments of the vast resources of the library in a way that makes them more easily accessible to the library consumer—they are the library equivalents of the flip-top box and the pull-top can.

But there are even more specific ways of fulfilling the special needs and providing the survival information essentials of the elderly and the handicapped, the functionally illiterate, Hispanic Americans, American Indians, and prisoners and other institutionalized people. They serve to illuminate the character and the direction of change in library service to all groups with special needs.

THE ELDERLY AND THE HANDICAPPED

As an outgrowth of services to the homebound elderly, staff members of the Brooklyn Public Library's senior citizen program, SAGE, realized that many older people wanted, more than anything else, to escape the confines of their homes and to expand their lives. To meet this need, a pilot program was developed in which a group of homebound "students" were bused to their branch library on a weekday morning when the branch was normally closed, for a nine-week college-type course on "The Psychology of Everyday Living," conducted by a highly experienced group therapist and gerontological educator. After each class, students were encouraged to check out library materials to read and enjoy during the week. One 84-year-old pupil commented: "Medicine can keep our bodies alive. This class not only gets us out of the house, but it keeps our minds alive as well."

Today more than 22 million Americans—or 10 per cent of the population—are over the age of 65. By the year 2000, the U. S. Census Bureau expects that number to have swelled to more than thirty million. The most rapidly growing segment of the elderly population are those between ages 75 and 85.

Weakening eyesight, physical frailty, loss of hearing and the psychological problems of isolation from the mainstream of American life are inevitably a part of the aging process. Because many millions of men and women over 65 live in retirement on severely reduced incomes, their special needs are aggravated by poverty. Approximately 25 per cent of those living below the poverty line are elderly.

Programs

Public library service designed to meet the special needs of the elderly has become a reality only within the last few years. The American Library Association has developed a collection of materials about these services. This resource, the Older Americans Program Idea Exchange, is made available to state and regional associations for use at conventions, and information from the collection is available to libraries for program ideas.

The movement to provide special service to the elderly had its beginnings in 1946, when the Cleveland Public Library established the Live Long and Like It Club under the leadership of Fern Long and Clara Lucioli. The club was dedicated to the then rather novel idea that attention should be paid to the educational needs of older people as well as to requirements of shelter and food.

The Brooklyn Public Library developed its SAGE program in conjunction with the Institute of Study for Older Adults at New York City Community College. An integral part of the SAGE program was "Senior Stop," an information and referral service for older adults. On a walk-in or phone-in basis, older adults were helped with information and referrals regarding housing, Medicare/Medicaid, Social Security, education, recreation, half-fare applications, rent increase exemptions and so on. The staff also helped fill out and complete forms. Because of their physical problems and the confusing array of assistance programs available to them, the elderly are sorely in need of information and referral services.

Frequently, as they grow older, people develop an increasing sense of uselessness and a feeling of being cut off from the rest of society. Public libraries have helped to overcome this negative feeling by finding ways to put some of the special skills of the elderly to work.

The Cleveland Public Library has run workshops to train older volunteers—members of Foster Grandparents, for example—so that they can conduct children's story hours in librar-

ies. In Newton, Kansas, the public library uses older adults as a resource for children's interest groups, mothers' discussion seminars and adult literature groups, and finds that the interaction has been stimulating for all involved. Sometimes senior citizens are cultivated as research resources. One Milwaukee shut-in has compiled a list of titles about Ireland and is systematically making her way through them. "When she has completed reading the books on her list," a librarian explains, "we believe she will be an unusually expert source of information about Ireland's literature, people and customs."

Literacy programs draw on older persons to serve as tutors. At the Brooklyn Public Library more than a third of the volunteer tutors are over sixty years of age.

Several Massachusetts libraries have instituted an information exchange for part-time employment of older adults in their communities.

As part of its recreational and educational program, the Monroe County (New York) Public Library provides live entertainers to senior centers—magicians, pianists, a woman who displays and talks about her extensive doll collection—all of them over sixty, all of them volunteers. Demand for these performers has been so great that the library maintains a "skills bank" file so that other agencies may draw on the performers' services.

For several weeks prior to April 15 each year, retired accountants—volunteers who are members of the American Association for Retired Persons and are specially trained by the Internal Revenue Service—help elderly citizens fill out their tax returns in thousands of public libraries across the country.

Kathlyn Adams, outreach consultant at the Monroe County (New York) Public Library in Rochester, has helped senior citizens learn the techniques of advocacy on behalf of themselves. Their advocacy group, Citizen Leaders for Action in Rochester (CLAR), has tackled questions relating to nursing homes, Social Security legislation and property tax exemptions, and has presented its members' views to local, state and federal officials.

Large-Print Books

Elderly people and others who have difficulty reading normal-size print can usually find on the shelves of their local public library a collection of attractively designed, easy-to-read large-print editions of best sellers, gothics, romances, Westerns, biographies, how-to books—just about every category of publication imaginable. The availability of large-print materials is revolutionizing public library service to the elderly, and it is a revolution largely stimulated by librarians themselves. Most public libraries in this country had none of these materials as recently as ten years ago.

Because the books are completely reset in 18-point type and their formats are similar to those of standard trade books, longer books must be printed in two volumes. These books are expensive to produce—the two volumes of John Le Carré's best seller *The Honourable Schoolboy* cost $18.95, and even paperback editions of large-print books typically run anywhere from $9 to $14. They are therefore beyond the personal means of the great majority of their elderly readers and simply would not be produced were it not for the market made possible by the public libraries.

Practical materials are also found in large-print library collections—such titles as *Help Yourself to a Job, A Guide for Retirees, Sex After Sixty, Living with Your Eye Operation.* Tape cassettes and large-print manuals put out by the Center for Independent Living are designed to train newly blind individuals, many of whom are elderly, to cope with housekeeping skills and achieve mobility in daily living activities.

Many local libraries produce their own large-print materials as they see a need. The Monroe County (New York) Public Library is printing a large-print directory of department stores. The Oklahoma Department of Libraries produces a large-print weekly newspaper column written at the fourth-grade reading level but geared to adult interests. The column is offered free to the state's 228 newspapers and carries world and national, but mostly Oklahoma news.

The primary problem with large-print materials is that there simply are not enough of them. The demand far exceeds their production.

Talking Books

The Library of Congress produces talking books—on records and cassette tapes—and books in Braille. Talking books are available to anyone who cannot read ordinary print, either because of visual impairment or a physical handicap that prevents them from being able to handle a book, such as the inability to turn a page or to sit up in bed. An estimated 60 per cent of the persons served by this program are over 60.

The more than 576,000 readers who use these special materials receive them through a network of 56 regional and 102 subregional libraries. In most states there is only one Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped; this is usually the state library. People are expected to write or telephone for the tapes, records or Braille books they wish to have mailed to them. Distribution and storage of these materials is not paid for by the federal government—the cost must be borne by the state or local library agency. The Library of Congress estimates that as many as seven million people eligible to receive talking books are not now being reached.

Additional handicapped people could be reached through local, personalized library service. The insufficiency of local funds has made this difficult, but results have been impressive where it has been tried.

Radio Reading

Radio reading is a new outreach service for libraries. By the end of 1977, libraries in Erie, Lancaster and York, Pennsylvania; in Nashville, Tennessee; in Jamestown, New York; in Salt Lake City, Utah; and in Seattle, Washington, were providing this service. These special radio programs provide in-depth coverage of events unavailable on television or radio news programs.

One of the most popular radio reading programs in Seattle is "Food Facts," which provides an impartial reading of grocery ads and best buys of the week. This is supplemented by a program which emphasizes meals that can be prepared from the special items advertised by local food stores. And, of course, histories, biographies and guidebooks of regional interest are also read over the Seattle Radio Talking Book.

John Movihill of the American Foundation for the Blind is enthusiastic about radio reading. "They have been reaching many of the elderly blind and handicapped who had never before been linked to social services of any kind. Libraries have also found that radio reading services have increased the use of their libraries, too."

Special Service to the Handicapped

The New York Public Library has been experimenting with a revolutionary new type of service for the blind: the Kurzweil Reading Machine. The machine contains an optical scanner that shoots a beam of fine white light across a printed page and converts it into a stream of digital data to be analyzed by its built-in computer and transformed into speech. The machine has controls to make it speak faster or slower, repeat phrases or spell out words.

The Kurzweil Reading Machine and other technological advances can truly open up libraries to the blind. As a representative of the National Federation of the Blind said, "Setting this thing in the New York library is significant because until it arrived, most of the books in the world's largest public library were off-limits to blind people."

Technological developments are helping to expand the library's ability to serve the handicapped:

New technology will permit high-speed production of Brailled plates automatically instead of by hand.

Several manufacturers have improved the availability of Braille reading materials through cassette equipment that accepts, stores and displays Braille on a tactile board rather than on paper. This could substantially reduce the bulkiness and inconvenience of the large paper volumes presently in use.

Tulsa Public Library has a Braillewriter that anyone who knows Braille can use to send letters to friends or to Braille their thoughts and ideas for themselves or others. Tulsa also has a talking calculator for the blind that sounds out the numbers as they are keyed and as they are totaled at the end of the transaction.

A lack of indexing has impeded the use of recorded materials by the blind and physically handicapped, but a voice-indexing system has been devised to overcome this limitation. The recording of index words is superimposed over the recording of the narrated text at sixteen times the speed of the text. The index words are heard and understood only when the cassette player is set on fast forward. An indexed recording of the pocket edition of the American Heritage Dictionary is in production.

Technology is also helping to extend library service to the deaf, a handicapped group which tends to be overlooked. Many libraries are installing teletypewriters, called TTY, so they can receive phone calls from the deaf. The TTY is an electronic receptacle for the telephone receiver that enables two people to converse over regular telephone lines. The calls are made exactly as hearing persons would make them, except that the conversation is typed. Use of the TTY requires no special knowledge or training.

The Public Library of Nashville and Davidson County (Tennessee) opened a new library service for the deaf in 1978 which permits patrons to phone the center and receive immediate printouts on a wide variety of topics.

Some libraries have on file a directory of individuals and organizations throughout the United States who own and operate TTY's.

Library service to the handicapped is still in its beginning stages. Such basic provisions as having ramps at library entrances so that patrons who are confined to wheelchairs can enter are just now being instituted. The first step of awareness has been reached, but the promise of welcoming the handicapped to the world of the library can only be fulfilled by increased momentum in the realms of action and funding.

THE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE

"When people come into the library to look at 'help wanted' ads in the paper and can barely understand what's written," says Robert Wedgeworth, executive director of the American Library Association, "then it's time for the librarian to step in where other American educational institutions have failed."

The National Advisory Council on Adult Education estimates that 28.5 million Americans require basic literacy training—training that will enable them to meet elementary survival needs: to read street and road signs, labels on cans, application forms, recipes. Less than half the American adult population is considered proficient at reading.

Once regarded as the major effort to reduce adult illiteracy in the United States, the adult basic education program of the U. S. Office of Education has reached only a small fraction of those in need of literacy training, according to a recent report to Congress by the comptroller general.

Spurred by the startling results of several recent studies which suggest that tens of millions of Americans do not possess the minimal reading, writing and calculating skills necessary to function in modern society, there has been a tremendous upswing in library-based literacy tutoring. While the Office of Education program works with groups of adults in classes, library programs emphasize one-to-one tutoring, which is generally recognized as a more effective technique, particularly among the most deficient readers.

Libraries have several advantages in the fight for literacy. They are community-based; they have the materials, space and organizational framework to back up a strong program. The role of libraries has long been the educational and cultural development of adults, and their traditional response has in-

cluded designing programs and tailoring materials to meet the needs of the particular user.

Perhaps most importantly, libraries are comfortable. Tutors have found that the bookish but relaxed, undemanding atmosphere of the library is particularly helpful in dispelling many of the anxieties of adult learners. For someone who cannot read, the simple act of entering a library, a place heretofore out of bounds to him or her, can bring a real psychological boost.

Plan of Action

Eradicating illiteracy is a top priority of the American Library Association. The ALA's Office of Library Service to the Disadvantaged, under the directorship of Jean Coleman, has taken a strong leadership role. In 1977, it published a manual for librarians by Helen Huguenor Lyman entitled *Literacy and the Nation's Libraries*, followed in 1978 by a *Directory of Literacy and Adult Learning Programs* which brings together descriptive profiles of library literacy programs in more than 71 library systems in 23 states, the District of Columbia and the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Saskatchewan.

With funds from the Lilly Foundation, Coleman's office recently carried out a literacy training project for representatives of 125 libraries from 35 states. At three four-day sessions in Syracuse (New York), Denver (Colorado) and Bloomington (Indiana), librarians, who attended in teams of two, learned how to tutor, to train others to tutor, to provide backup service to volunteer tutorial programs, to work with other agencies and to develop special collections for new readers. Those who participated committed themselves to reproducing their training for librarians back home within six months of the date of the ALA training session.

Literacy Volunteers

The use of volunteers in one-to-one tutoring makes financially possible a program that would otherwise be prohibitively

expensive. Many of the tutors teaching basic literacy skills—whether they are library staff members or volunteers from the community—have been trained by the Literacy Volunteers of America, a growing nonprofit organization started sixteen years ago in Syracuse, New York. In some areas, such as Memphis and Philadelphia, libraries work with Laubach National Alliance for Literacy Advancement, a group that implements a teaching technique known the world over as "each one teach one" method. It was started in the 1920s by the missionary Dr. Frank Laubach during his years among the Moro people of the Philippines. Students are encouraged to go on to become volunteer tutors themselves. Both of these groups train volunteers to work with individuals whose skills range from zero literacy to about a fifth-grade reading level. The emphasis is on working with the individual student to achieve his particular goal, whether it is to learn to read a job application in order to find work; to qualify for a better job; or to read to the children in the family.

Both Literacy Volunteers and Laubach have an increased number of affiliates among library systems. In the past, librarians who have been eager to develop service to illiterates have been hampered by a fundamental lack of knowledge, skills and ideas. Collaboration with these groups of organized volunteers has stimulated librarians to assume a variety of active roles. Says Connie Haendle, director of field services for Literacy Volunteers of America, "The services offered by the libraries varied, but in every case, bringing together the special talents of volunteers and librarians produced a program more effective than would have been possible for either group to do alone."

Some libraries cooperated with Literacy Volunteers by making a collection of high interest/low vocabulary reading materials available to tutors and students. Some provided space for tutoring and training workshops. Other libraries spearheaded the establishment of Literacy Volunteers in their communities by providing a staff coordinator, telephone service, space and public relations services.

Programs

Tulsa, Oklahoma

In 1976, the public library in Tulsa, Oklahoma, arranged for two of its staff members to receive training in teaching illiterates at the headquarters of Literacy Volunteers in Syracuse, New York. In eighteen hours of training workshops they learned the techniques of teaching reading and the other requirements of being a competent tutor, such as how to find a student's reading level, how to keep a student motivated and how to use resources effectively. Following the return of these librarians to Tulsa, tutor training workshops have been held at the library for both staff and volunteers from the community as well as a special workshop for staff members of local human service agencies such as the Tulsa Housing Authority, the Salvation Army, the Women Offenders Resource Center, the Job Corps and others. Today the library at Tulsa has an average of fifty tutors, with fifty to sixty students.

Denver, Colorado

Federal funds under the 1974 Right to Read Act (a multifaceted program intended to stimulate innovative reading programs) have enabled a few libraries to reach larger numbers of people. The Denver Public Library tutors on a one-to-one basis about five hundred functional illiterates and four hundred Spanish-speaking adults. Students and tutors work wherever it is convenient—in the library's learning center situated in the heavily Chicano area of Denver's southwest side, in churches, in community centers and in people's homes.

Materials

One of the serious problems in literacy programs for adults is finding good reading material. The tutors emphasize that success depends directly on how relevant and interesting the read-

ing materials are to the individual student. Literature designed to teach children to read ("See Spot run. Run, Spot, run.") is seldom suitable for adults, whose experience as parents, employees and members of a community gives them an entirely different range of experiences and interests. One study found that subjects of particular interest to adult illiterates included Langston Hughes's poetry, hints on careful buying, information about better jobs, selected readings from the Bible, biographical sketches and topics of social interest. With funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities, a selected list of high interest/low reading level materials dealing with the humanities has been compiled by Literacy Volunteers.

Some of the innovative materials the Free Library of Philadelphia makes available for adult learners include workbooks which provide practice in filling out application forms; a math book that uses paychecks, shopping, home improvement loans and automobile insurance as the means for bringing the subject alive; and a series of carefully abridged versions of well-known works of fiction such as *Dracula* and *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, plus autobiographies of Frederick Douglass, Althea Gibson and Gordon Parks.

Many public libraries make available books and pamphlets specially designed to encourage new adult readers to use their newly acquired skills. "Life coping" pamphlets, written in a style and vocabulary aimed at adults who read at fifth- to seventh-grade levels, can be found in all forty-seven branches of the Free Library of Philadelphia. The pamphlets deal with such practical problems as how to make use of employment, health and other service agencies; how to recognize symptoms of illness; how to take out citizenship papers; how to get a driver's license; and how to resolve a landlord-tenant dispute. One two-volume pamphlet describes fifty different job fields and occupations and tells the adult reader how to obtain more information. Another series includes such titles as *Be Informed on Money, Be Informed on Marriage, Be Informed on Banking* and *Be Informed on Nutrition.*

Accessibility

Libraries are experimenting with ways to make these materials accessible to new adult readers. Special collections for both tutors and students are sometimes placed in a separate area on specially designated shelves. Such a collection is useful not only to the beginning reader (he knows where to go to find what he wants), but can also be helpful to researchers, high school students and teachers who are looking for tutoring materials. Other libraries interfile titles selected for literacy or adult education programs in the main collection. A separate card file can be developed for a particular clientele; a color-coding system can be used to denote the reading level of the literacy materials. "Whatever the method of organizing the materials," writes Helen Lyman in *Literacy and the Nation's Libraries*, "once they are selected, the librarian remains the key to their usefulness. Sensitivity to and genuine interest in the client and a spontaneous, creative approach to the possibilities that exist are by far the most important factors, whatever arrangement is decided upon."

Roles and Priorities

The role of libraries in a national "war on illiteracy" was the focus of a three-day conference in the spring of 1979, sponsored by the White House Conference on Library and Information Services, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Institute of Education and the U. S. Office of Education. At the conference, libraries were seen as the focal point for community action, serving to coordinate and publicize information resources for those who need help, and to mobilize all available volunteer help. As community information centers, the libraries would supply information to those teaching basic reading skills and be a ready reference point for all community resources in the field.

Unless funding is made available for literacy training, the

conference's recommendations will be of little value. Many conferees expressed doubt that new money would be provided for literacy activities in an age when administrators are slashing school and public library budgets. Chairman Charles Benton of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Service was more optimistic: "The money is there if you can prove the priority . . . that's what our job is all about—a struggle for priorities."

HISPANIC AMERICANS

Migrant labor camps, ranches, small Mexican communities—these are typical stops along the route of "La Biblioteca Ambulante." The big green-white-and-red bookmobile was established in 1968 to serve the Spanish-speaking community in Fresno County, California. Patrons were not required to sign any registration form and, since 40 per cent of the parents were illiterate, children were not asked to take applications home for parental signature. The library program was successful. One of the findings: even with no fines and no overdue notices, returns averaged 80 per cent.

Mary Reynolds, who directed La Biblioteca Ambulante, commented, ". . . the project's first step was to de-Anglicize. It did so in three ways: by simplifying registration and circulation procedures; by building an experimental Spanish collection; and most importantly, by employing local bilingual staff members."

These points are considered basic in library service to Spanish-speaking Americans. In 1974, William H. Farrington studied library service to Hispanic Americans in *Library and Information Services for Special Groups*. "Time and again librarians mentioned that *all* traditional library rules and regulations must be ignored. The poor, of whatever ethnic background, are not interested in any service that might cost them money. Fines, overdue and lost book charges and badgering for the return of materials are self-defeating. The picture of a child bullied into taking books he does not want and then hounded when they are not returned on time has done much to permanently damage the image of librarians. Free public library service must be free in depressed areas."

The Spanish-speaking population in the United States now numbers almost 12 million. It is the second largest minority in the country. The three largest subgroups are the Mexican-

Americans (or Chicanos), the Puerto Ricans and the Cubans. Mexican-Americans comprise about 55 per cent of the Spanish-origin population. Their numbers are concentrated in the five Southwestern states of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas, where they are the largest minority group.

The Spanish-speaking population is young and rapidly increasing. It has a median age of 22, eight years younger than the rest of the population. The U. S. Census Bureau estimates that this young median age will continue for the next quarter century and that by the year 2000, Hispanics will be the largest ethnic minority in the country.

The educational needs of the Spanish-speaking are considerable. The high school dropout rate for Hispanics over 16 is about 50 per cent. Of those 25 and over, 18 per cent have received no more than five years of schooling (this compares with 3.7 per cent of the total population). Only 6.2 per cent are college-educated.

With so little education, it is not surprising that 23 per cent of the Spanish-speaking live below the poverty level, compared with 9 per cent of non-Spanish-speaking families. The national median income for Spanish-speaking families is well below that of non-Spanish-speaking families.

Chicanos, Puerto Ricans and, to a lesser extent, Cubans maintain close relations with their homelands. They have not disappeared inside the "melting pot," but have kept their cultural distinctiveness.

Programs

The main challenge facing any librarian who attempts to introduce service to Hispanics is developing a practical and useful program that will be valuable to a reluctant clientele. Members of the American Library Association's Social Responsibilities Roundtable Chicano Task Force have pointed out in *Guidelines for Library Service to the Spanish-Speaking* that the reluctance "is not due to a lack of interest, but rather to a misunderstanding of how libraries function and a mistrust and uneasiness about what to expect from them."

William Farrington noted that successful programs shared the quality of flexibility. "If something didn't work, it was dropped and a new approach used. Nearly all were media-oriented and stressed non-print materials as much as, or more than books."

The Denver Public Library's El Numero Cinco—a bookmobile that served Mexican-American neighborhoods—made regular stops at city parks. Tables and chairs were set up outside the bookmobile and programs were developed as they were needed. Classes were established in art, guitar and sewing—none of which were part of the original plan.

Neva Bequette, evaluating a bookmobile service in Kennewick, Washington, that was directed at migrant camps and low-income developments in cities, stated, "The staff found that just circulating books was not enough. They had to go that one step beyond and give services that only by stretching the point can be called library services." Said Farrington, "No project report failed to mention this aspect."

Strikingly, the Kennewick Service was never able to make regular library users of its patrons. This, Farrington observed, was common to most similar efforts. The librarians wanted to "lure them to our established libraries and branches." But, as Neva Bequette noted, "The library still is the Establishment."

A storefront operation in Albuquerque, New Mexico, was more successful. A bicycle repair class nearly took over the building and free income tax service brought hundreds of people into the library for the first time. A study of the new service clearly indicated increased library use by area residents as a direct result of the storefront library. "The most important finding," reported the evaluator, "relates to *how* residents of the [area] regard the library system and the change in their attitudes in two years. The youth of the area have changed from a pattern of slight use of an established area library [the central branch] to heavy use of the [storefront]. Their use patterns now approximate those found in a 'typical middle-income' neighborhood."

Adult use was less impressive. Adults at a higher educational level preferred the central branch, and other adults did not become storefront users in large numbers. But they so valued the

service that, in response to questioning, neighborhood adults indicated "they were willing to fight for its continued maintenance."

Bilingual Staff

William Farrington noted in his paper that "all projects were aware that a bilingual staff was necessary."

Barbara Wynn, director of La Biblioteca Latino Americana in Oakland, California, made a revealing observation. "We were early made aware that potential patrons might be reluctant to come into the library unless they saw Mexican-American people working there. On one occasion, a girl who had already attended a class session at the library returned, but waited outside for at least twenty minutes until she saw a Mexican-American come on duty."

Mary Reynolds, who directed La Biblioteca Ambulante, noted that "bilingual Mexican-Americans are essential, for their very presence attracts otherwise hesitant patrons." The Denver bookmobile staff were all bilingual, "selected for their genuine desire to work with people as well as for language ability."

Clearly, sustained and effective service to Spanish-speaking populations in this country requires the existence of a body of Spanish-speaking, Spanish-heritage librarians. When public library directors in localities with significant Spanish-speaking populations were asked, in a recent survey conducted by the Graduate Library School of the University of Arizona, what factors attracted Spanish-speaking persons to their libraries and what suggestions they would make to improve library service to them, the overwhelming response to both questions was "a Spanish-speaking staff." (Furthermore, although the great majority of the directors had not had any courses in library school designed to help them serve the Spanish speaking, 94 per cent of those responding supported such courses.)

Training

Lillian Lopez, the Puerto Rican-born coordinator of special services for the New York Public Library, told an interviewer that too many library administrators believe that anyone—even a library page or an aide—can help Hispanic clients. While such staff might know some Spanish, she believes that they will not know or understand appropriate library materials and will not possess the expertise necessary to provide adequate service. Providing fotonovelas and Spanish-language picture books or comic books is not the equivalent of identifying appropriate materials for Spanish-speaking readers. "Because fotonovelas are available, people read them," says Ms. Lopez. "But in our libraries we should provide materials that upgrade and inform our people. We should encourage Hispanics to read the best materials possible."

Beginning in 1972, federal LSCA money established two special library school programs—at California State University/Fullerton (1972–74) and at the University of Arizona/Tucson (1976–79). These have provided an additional 60 Hispanic-heritage librarians. Today there are approximately 264 such librarians in the United States—hardly an impressive figure when matched against the 12 million people in need of their service.

A strong effort to recruit Spanish-heritage young people to the library profession is needed, preferably by assisting high school and college students to find part-time jobs in libraries at the subprofessional level to acquaint them with library work. In addition, library schools must overhaul their curricula for all students so that they will have an opportunity to become aware of the needs of the Spanish-speaking and other minority groups for library service.

El Paso, a border city of some 500,000 inhabitants with almost 50 per cent of the population Spanish-speaking, has had an active Mexican-American Services Office in the Public Library since 1971. The Office has built an excellent collection of materials on Chicanos and their heritage and provides book-

mobile and branch service inside the several barrios (neighborhoods) in El Paso. It provided the groundwork on which fuller Mexican-American participation in library service could be built.

Cesar Caballero, head of Chicano services at the University of Texas/El Paso, recently described (*Wilson Library Bulletin*, November, 1978) a number of self-initiated library projects that have sprung up in El Paso. One, a modest library put together by a group of young activists to provide support for a newly established community center, stimulated the reading interest of the center's users sufficiently that they petitioned the Public Library for bookmobile service—and received it. When, in 1975, the El Paso Public Library administration decided to "freeze" the position of Mexican-American services librarian after it was vacated, a coalition of Hispanic organizations was formed to meet with the library administration. Its petition for reinstating the position was denied. The group went directly to the city council and the mayor . . . and finally won.

"The coalition's success is significant," says Cesar Caballero, "but even more so is that a large segment of the Mexican-American community made a show of its concern for library services and in the process informed and educated other people to the necessity of these services for their community."

Spurred on by the success of this endeavor, a group of Chicanos in El Paso, both lay people and librarians, decided to form a permanent organization—a local chapter of Reforma, the national association of Spanish-speaking librarians. The chapter has been involved in recruiting Chicanos to attend library school and in encouraging Spanish-speaking professionals to apply for open positions in the local libraries; it has promoted reading and the use of libraries by sponsoring book reviews and public service announcements on local Chicano television programs; and it is working on a special reading program for children. Recently, the El Paso chapter of Reforma succeeded in placing one of its members—Cesar Caballero—on the El Paso Public Library Board of Directors. It took a year-long, hard-fought campaign. "It was only a beginning," says Luis Chaparro, president of the Reforma El Paso chapter. In 1979 Mr. Chaparro and another member of Reforma were nar-

rowly defeated for board membership in a contest featuring one of the largest library board election turnouts in El Paso's history. "We'll get there next time," says a determined Chaparro.

The national organization of Reforma was established in 1971. It is an affiliate of the American Library Association and is committed to uniting and supporting all librarians who feel strongly about providing better service for Americans of Spanish heritage. It has begun to have considerable impact, both in national library activities and in the communities where it has organized chapters.

According to Daniel Flores Duran, national president of Reforma, there has been a shift in emphasis in serving the Spanish-heritage minority. He believes that the small gains made in providing tailor-made library services for Latinos through innovative programs have pretty much come to a standstill. "Most of these programs were developed with soft moneys through state or federal grants, and that meant that sponsoring institutions did not have a strong commitment to maintaining those services. When the money dried up, the programs themselves disappeared."

One librarian who ran a short-term federal project lamented, "Personal service that stops after two years destroys trust. The problem is how to establish library service to the Spanish-speaking as a basic service offered *continuously*."

NATIVE AMERICANS

It was in 1970 that Nanette Argent, a master's degree student in the Library School at the University of Missouri, set out to write a paper on library service to American Indians in the Southwest. Wherever she turned for information, she was told that such service was practically nonexistent. She found that "the problem of illiteracy among the Indians is still so great that adequate library service has been considered as a need of the future, if considered at all." As she continued the investigation, she discovered that, "The language problem is the real barrier to library service for Indians. There are no books in Tiwa, Tewa, Towa or Keres, the languages of the Pueblo Indians. Until the white man invented it, the Indians had no written language. The majority of the Indians do not read either Spanish or English."

In the course of surveying federal facilities for Indians in 1965–66, a committee of the U. S. Senate studied whether or not Indians were benefiting from the Library Services and Construction Act of 1964. The committee learned that, of the 116 tribes or agencies listed, only 24 had bookmobile service. Neighboring public libraries were as far as 135 miles away and many of those close to reservations either did not check out books to "nonresidents" of the city or charged a fee. Only 3 tribes reported receiving deposit collections from state librarians. Thirteen tribes had small community libraries, most of them "donated" libraries begun by VISTA volunteers. Reports of contacts between bookmobile librarians and their intended clients were not encouraging. Wrote William Gordon in an article in *Minnesota Libraries*, "Those of us who were working on the [bookmobile] had never experienced such a sense of rejection and failure as at that time. There was virtually no communication, no response to our inquiries or suggestions that we might help."

Major changes have begun to occur in library service for Native Americans since those early efforts. The sprawling Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Idaho (where, on a visit in 1968, Senator Robert Kennedy was appalled to find only one Indian-related book in a local school library) went from no service at all in 1963 for its 3,000 Shoshone and Bannock residents, to one of the finest reservation libraries in the nation by 1974. A Bureau of Indian Affairs official credited tribal leadership with the library progress. He told *Library Journal*, "It's been their insistence that has seen this happen." When federal money was cut, the tribe budgeted its own funds for librarians' salaries, bookmobile and library overhead, and 55 magazine subscriptions.

"Self-determination is probably the key to successful library service to any minority group," wrote Janet Naumer, librarian of the Institute of American Indian Arts, in 1974 in *Library and Information Services for Special Groups*. "No contemporary article by or about North American Indians seems complete without it. Yet it has little meaning for the dominant culture, since it is simply taken for granted along with other 'inalienable rights.'" Ms. Naumer reviewed the early attempts to develop American Indian library service at the community level. Among them were the project of the Northeast Kansas Library System at the Potawatomi and Kickapoo reservations; the South Dakota Library Commission's efforts at the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Sioux reservations; work serving Pueblo and Navajo Indians in Minnesota at the Chippewa reservations; the New Mexico State Library bookmobiles/the Four Corners Mobile Library Service serving Navajo and Apache residents; the Sioux City Public Library in Iowa, which pioneered with interstate cooperation in serving the Winnebago reservation in northeast Nebraska; and efforts by the public libraries in Tulsa, Billings, St. Paul, Cleveland and Chicago to serve the urban Indian.

At the end of her detailed study, Janet Naumer came to the following conclusions:

First, and most important in library programs that are successful, the Indian people most directly concerned have had a part in the basic planning and implementation. Guidance and

direction concerning type of program to be established have come from the Indian people themselves, whether from tribal councils, Indian centers, or Indian education divisions of state education agencies.

Second, successful programs have invariably employed Indian community residents. Libraries are new to Indian people, and they must be introduced to them by someone the community trusts.

Third, Indians need to play a major role in the selection of materials. Experience has shown that the following "needs can usually be anticipated: materials concerning Indian tribes by region, such as Plains, Woodlands, Southwest; materials concerning general Indian history; materials on contemporary Indian problems and movements; materials on Indian art, crafts, religion, folklore; materials dealing with minority problems; and practical materials, such as how-to-do-it books on auto mechanics. Beyond this, Indian requests tend to be much the same as the rest of the general reading public."

Ms. Naumer wound up her report with this simple challenge: "Having demonstrated a need, librarians and Indian leaders are under an obligation to continue to fill it."

The Present-Day Native American Population

The 1970 census counted 792,730 Native Americans in the United States; the figure is expected to exceed one million in the 1980 census. It is a young and rapidly growing population. The median age is 20.4 years.

By 1970 nearly half of the Indian population lived in urban areas. *Forty per cent* of Indian families have incomes below the poverty level. This is in contrast to 10.7 per cent for the entire population. Median family income is well below that for the nation as a whole. Unemployment runs three times the national average; alcoholism and mental health problems constitute major health hazards (the suicide rate is also high). Life expectancy is seven years below the national norm.

Indian education is improving—in the past few years there has been a spectacular rise in enrollment of Indian students in

colleges—but, overall, education remains inadequate. Only 33 per cent of American Indian people over 25 years of age possessed a high school diploma in 1970. This was an increase from 20 per cent in 1960, but was still significantly lower than the national average of 52.3 per cent. Adult functional illiteracy affects more than a third of the population in some reservation communities. The dropout rate for students is also extremely high—only one out of two enrolled students can expect to complete high school.

The National Indian Education Association (NIEA) Library Project is a national research and demonstration effort in American Indian library service which got underway in the early 1970s. Its primary purpose was the identification of Indian information needs. To accomplish this task, the University of Minnesota's Bureau of Field Studies conducted a survey at three communities chosen by the project to serve as research and demonstration sites—the Rough Rock community in Arizona, the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in North and South Dakota and the Saint Regis Mohawk reservation in New York. People were asked what they thought was important for them to know or to have available. Ratings of high importance were interpreted as an indication of need. Wrote Charles Townley of the results of the survey:

> The data reflects problems and needs that go far beyond romantic and stereotyped images of American Indians. The needs data reflects a twentieth-century struggle with the problems of discrimination, unemployment, poverty, economic development, as well as personal and group identity. The data clearly reflects a renewed interest in Indian history and culture. Pride in being Indian, interest particularly in local tribal history and culture, and interest in native languages are growing stronger. These trends do not reflect the desire for an impossible return to the past, but a mustering of new strength for the future. . . . The data presents a picture of contemporary reservation life that is hard and presents few opportunities. Indian people want information on how and where to

find employment. They want to know about vocational training opportunities. They are very concerned about their legal and civil rights. There is a strong desire for information which will help solve the problems of health and social relations in their personal lives. People are free only to do those things which they know how to do. Library information services cannot solve the pressing problems of reservation life, but they can provide knowledge as one problem-solving tool and at the same time, serve as the repository for a cultural heritage that may otherwise be gradually lost.

The City Indian

The challenge of providing adequate library and information service for urban-dwelling American Indians—half of the entire Indian population—can be even more difficult than developing good service on reservations. Indians who live in cities do not, for the most part, live in ghettos where they can readily be identified, nor are concentrations great. Los Angeles, with the largest urban population of Indians in the country, has only 24,000 Native Americans (1973 figure).

Cogent reasons justifying the provision of special services for Indian people in urban areas have been stated by Marie Jones and Edith Casady, two women who originally implemented the Sioux City Indian Library Project:

> Many Indian people belong to a lower socio-economic sector and often are discriminated against in housing, education, employment, health services and law enforcement. Away from the protections of their own cultures and repressed in the majority culture, they have a special need for reinforcement of self-esteem. Information and referral services can help provide solutions to their everyday needs, which will assist them in becoming more productive members of society. The library can then provide materials on Indian his-

tory and culture, which help to give roots and a sense of belonging. The need for these special services becomes more pressing as Indian populations increase in the cities. . . .

Reaching Out

The task of consciousness-raising among Indians, librarians and the general public is the first step toward establishing effective service in urban areas. In Grand Rapids, the public library received an LSCA grant through the state library to work with the Ottawas, Chippewas and Potawatomies on an oral history project. As a result of their work in visiting and locating appropriate interview subjects, non-Indian library staff members and community residents developed a greater awareness of the Indian communities. Indian people in the area are now much more aware of libraries and their desire to provide the services that Indian people want.

In Chicago, members of the American Library Association's Office for Library Service to the Disadvantaged, the Chicago Public Library and the National Indian Education Association have been meeting for five years to develop library planning strategy for addressing the information needs of Indians in the Chicago area. It has been a process of slow steps leading toward mutual understanding. Recently completed plans call for an Indian advisory committee which will develop materials as well as Indian-related programming for the Chicago Public Library.

As they have with other minority groups, public libraries are learning to help overcome the stigma of being the "outside, establishment agency" by employing Indian library aides recruited from the community and trained in the library, and by working with organized Indian groups, such as the Indian centers found in many cities with sizable populations.

There have been some breakthroughs on the state level as well. In 1977, the New York State Legislature enacted Indian library legislation providing an annual appropriation of $100,000—the first such special appropriation in the nation.

The legislation was based upon the successful Akwesasne Library, which was opened in 1971, funded by the NIEA and the LSCA to serve residents of the St. Regis Mohawk reservation.

In New Mexico, the State Library has strengthened support to American Indian library service. It provides substantial grants to some public library efforts and its bookmobile service to Indian people has been improved by the addition of Indian personnel and of materials more directly related to Indian information needs.

In Arizona, staff from the state library have conducted workshops to train Indian library staff members. And, according to Jean Coleman of the ALA's Office for Library Service to the Disadvantaged, the state library personnel have made significant inroads in trying to serve fourteen different Indian tribes on nineteen reservations located within state boundaries.

In Wisconsin, Mary Tsosie (Navajo) directs the Wisconsin Indian Library Training Program—a program designed to train Indian library aides as the first step in implementing a statewide plan to provide library service to Indians by Indians for every reservation in the state.

The future direction and success of Indian library service will be determined by Indian professionals. There are only twenty-five today. There is a pressing need for more. Two institutes to train Indian people as professional library personnel were completed with Federal Higher Education Act funds. Arizona State University graduated twelve Indian school library media specialists in 1974 and 1975, and the University of Arizona institute enrolled ten Indian people in the M.L.S. program in 1973–74. Both programs were based on the normal curriculum, with supplemental counseling, internships and courses directly related to Indian information needs.

A graduate program in library science of the School of Librarianship at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo—the Public Library Service to Native American and Spanish Speaking Groups Program—is now in its second year of operation. The program includes both academic course and internship experiences.

Library service to Native Americans has been a slowly developing activity. If service is to be implemented nationwide,

as indeed it must be, a national policy commitment must be established, and a continuing and adequate funding base developed. The current focus of this effort is on the passage of an Omnibus Indian Library Bill at the federal level. Meanwhile other libraries can aid the expansion of services to Native Americans through developing urban collections of Indian materials; networking to share their resources with existing Indian libraries; supporting the training of Indian librarians; and advocating a national program for safeguarding tribal materials and oral traditions.

THE HOMEBOUND

Librarians have long recognized the need to provide service to the homebound elderly. The challenge has been learning how to reach them. In 1967, when the Milwaukee Public Library began its "Over 60" service, a team of community aides went knocking on doors. "We tried to work with church groups but found that they were reluctant to give us names," explains Doris Roy Nix, librarian in charge. "So we just went door to door in the older parts of the city where we thought there were a lot of older people. If we didn't find shut-ins ourselves, we often found those who could steer us to friends and relatives who were shut in in other parts of the city. . . . And gradually that was how we built up our shut-in clientele." The service is so well known now that the visiting nurse and health agencies automatically refer patients to the library's shut-in service. Eligible candidates who are unable to travel to a bookmobile or a branch library are interviewed in person by a librarian to learn about the kinds of materials the person would like to receive. Each shut-in, on a regular basis, deals with the same librarian, whose job is to become familiar with the client's interests and to select appropriate materials.

The demands of the frail woman confined to a wheelchair who wants "more mysteries, the bloodier the better" are relatively simple to meet. More difficult are the requests of an 81-year-old former symphony orchestra violinist for "specific concerti, symphonies and other classical recordings as played by specific symphony orchestras." Explains the Milwaukee librarian who works with him, "Although fulfilling his desires takes a considerable amount of time, his enjoyment of all the materials he receives makes it well worthwhile."

Books and materials are delivered to the door of each shut-in about every three weeks. A maximum of twenty books are delivered at a time. "That's about the limit," says Mrs. Nix, "be-

cause we pack them into bags and the person who carries the bags can carry two of them." Deliveries are made by community aides who are themselves retired people. "We try to send the same aide to the same shut-in so that there is a certain amount of personal contact involved . . . sometimes friendships spring up." The community aides currently range in age from 64 to 76. They are recruited by the Milwaukee City Service Commission, work twelve hours a week and, in addition to their hourly wage, are reimbursed for travel expenses. The library requires that aides know something about books, but the primary consideration is that they like to work with people, are friendly and are skillful in encouraging reading. Milwaukee's librarians have found that the aides are able to dispel the suspicion and hostility that often characterize elderly shut-ins.

Volunteers are used by many public libraries to provide personal, individualized service to shut-ins. In Kenosha, Wisconsin, the public library has trained volunteers to read aloud at a center for the elderly. The Los Angeles Public Library has close to 250 volunteers working out of most of the 61 branches and the Central Library to circulate more than 5,700 books, cassettes, records, magazines, music scores and other materials each month. Dallas's volunteers run the gamut from a television actor to a retired registered nurse to a 75-year-old man who just completed a bachelor's degree in psychology and who also does volunteer work at the Mental Health Association.

At the Musser Public Library in Muscatine, Iowa, an hour's visit goes along with the fortnightly book delivery service, and the library makes a diligent effort to match volunteers with prospective clients according to reading interests and hobbies.

Rowan Public Library in Salisbury, North Carolina, is proud that their outreach library service to the homebound sometimes enables them to help their clients link up to social services they need. Through the Council on Aging, the library recently arranged for housekeeping services for an elderly client living alone in one room who had grown increasingly blind.

A simple and inexpensive outreach program to serve homebound people is run by the Cranston (Rhode Island) Public Library. A part-time librarian telephones elderly people served

by Meals on Wheels and arranges for the volunteer drivers to deliver library materials to fill the shut-ins' wants.

What kinds of materials do libraries lend their shut-in clients? In addition to books and records, libraries deliver such things as: pattern books for crocheting or for making stuffed toys; special games and playing cards for the visually handicapped; cassette players with tapes of old-time hit songs and of radio programs of the thirties and forties, such as Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Charlie McCarthy. In some communities, volunteers record church services and school and civic events on cassette tapes for loan to shut-ins. Special equipment is often provided—ceiling projectors for bedridden patients, lighted magnifying lenses, special stands to hold books. For Clarence Wraight of Spencer, North Carolina, who has no use of his arms or legs, the Rowan Public Library lends one of its automatic page turners, which Mr. Wraight can operate by touching a lever with his chin.

Librarians usually do not charge fines to homebound users, nor do they hold them responsible for lost or damaged books—but the question rarely comes up. Elderly people, they find, are very responsible when it comes to taking care of library materials. They have learned to appreciate their value.

HOSPITAL PATIENTS

A million persons over 65 are presently in institutions in the United States, primarily nursing homes. The number has been rising as the proportion of widowed females in the elderly population has increased.

In Milwaukee, an "Over 60" bookmobile makes regular stops in Milwaukee County at large nursing homes (a van serves smaller institutions), homes for the aged, day centers, housing projects and neighborhoods where many people over sixty live. The bookmobile is a mini-library carrying some four thousand books to serve a wide variety of interests, as well as large-print books and foreign-language materials. It makes about fifty stops over a three-week schedule, each one lasting about forty-five minutes. It is equipped with a hydraulic lift at the rear, which is used for delivering loaded book carts to the nursing homes and for lifting aboard wheelchair patrons who wish to visit the bookmobile itself.

Wherever this type of institutional service is offered, librarians have discovered that success depends on warm personal contacts made on a regular basis. Much depends on the interest and enthusiasm of the nursing home staff, particularly the director of the home. The Monroe County (New York) Public Library finds it helpful to bring nursing home personnel into the library to familiarize them with the resources which can help them in their professional work—the most current literature in the field of gerontology and nursing care, for example—and materials that can be adapted in imaginative ways for use by their patients.

The librarian in charge of nursing home service in Skokie, Illinois, says, "An enthusiastic, aware occupational therapist is the connecting link which makes our service work." An art therapist planned a Bicentennial program for residents on the subject of American painters, using framed prints, posters,

films and slides as well as books—all from the Skokie Public Library. Observes another experienced librarian: "Librarians must be prepared to go beyond the basic duty of supplying books. It is difficult to draw a dividing line between giving a library service and acting as a welfare visitor."

INMATES OF CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Don E. Cox, an inmate at the Federal Correctional Institution at Lompoc, California, wrote a letter to *Publisher's Weekly* in July 1974 in response to an article in the June 17 issue entitled "Books for Prisoners." "Yes," he wrote, "prisoners *need* books. But they need the same kinds of books you read, and they need to get them from the same places. . . . Rather than donating books to institutions, what really needs to be done is to allow prisoners the privilege of borrowing books from public libraries. A library system already exists in this country—all we need is the right to use it. . . . If prisons are ever going to improve the way I feel they must, people must stop thinking in terms of prisoners' libraries, prisoners' this, or prisoners' that, and must start realizing that the prison system is part of the community and as such must interact with it."

During the 1970 riots at the Tombs prison in Manhattan, prisoners waged an angry attack on the library, toppling books from shelves and destroying more than 4,000 volumes. The library consisted of donations solicited from libraries and publishers. There were books in German and in French, 300 copies of the *Autobiography of King Farouk* and 500 copies of *The Coin Collectors Handbook*. There was little of relevance or value to men in confinement. "Even the best recreational and educational reading would not fill such a need," commented Marjorie Le Donne, Institutional Specialist for the California State Library. "These men want law books to fight their own battles against a system that seems united against them. They want materials that tell of the social injustice they have experienced. They want literature from their neighborhoods and streets which tells them that not everyone has forgotten them. They want *Muhammad Speaks, Fortune News, Akwesasne*

Notes, Free World Times, La Raza and *Penal Digest*. Rehabilitational materials are not enough; they want also information that will give them power."

Library Service to prisoners in the United States has a long history, going back to at least 1852, when the San Quentin Prison in California opened the first general library for inmates. It was a time when the power of "uplifting reading" was thought to help reform criminals. More often than not, however, prison libraries became repositories for unwanted old books. The first survey of library access in state and federal adult correctional institutions, published in 1966 by the American Library Association as part of the *National Inventory of Library Needs*, found that prison library collections were often housed in an inaccessible closet where they remained uncirculated and unsupervised. In the better operations, printed catalogs were placed in each cell block and inmates filled out requests for titles they thought they would like to read, judging by the titles, a favorite author or the recommendation of one of their inmate friends. Another obstacle to reading was that cells were usually equipped with no more than 25-watt bulbs.

"Both overt and covert censorship has existed in prison libraries," writes Linda Lucas, a member of the faculty of the University of South Carolina's College of Librarianship. "Not only has access to detective stories or books on locksmithing been restricted, but access to legal information also has been limited. Inmates literate only in a language other than English often have been unable to obtain appropriate reading material. The supply of materials for poor readers is often limited."

Important developments in the late 1960s and early 1970s spurred improved service to prisoners. Beginning in 1966, LSCA Title IV-A provided funds to the states on a matching basis to establish or improve library service in state institutions. Prisoners themselves began to demand recognition and treatment as human beings who need contact with the outside world—they wanted information and relevant reading matter. Sociologists in the field realized the need for prisoners to maintain contacts with society and to receive re-entry briefings. In 1971 the Supreme Court upheld the California Lynch/Gilmore decision, which ruled that not only do prisoners have a

right to legal materials, but the state has a positive obligation to provide those materials as a means of access to the courts. And during these years public libraries, out of a growing sense of social responsibility, began to step up their service to jails and prisons and other correctional institutions.

There are approximately 500,000 men, women and children incarcerated in the United States on any given day. Most are members of a minority group, have had little or no high school education and are poor.

A study published in 1973 by the Syracuse University Research Corporation pointed out that "unofficial estimates by the U. S. Bureau of Prisons indicate between 20–50 per cent of the approximately half million adults incarcerated in American state and federal prisons can neither read nor write. In a majority of American institutions, at least 50 per cent of those in custody over 18 years of age have less than an eighth grade education. In some facilities for youthful offenders, as many as 80 per cent of the youngsters incarcerated are illiterate."

Kenneth Wooden, in his recent report, *Weeping in the Playtime of Others*, says of the thousands of young people incarcerated behind the walls of penal institutions:

> Here more than 80 per cent of them are locked within yet another prison whose walls are more formidable, whose confinement is more restrictive and whose sentence is harsh and unjust. The walls are the printed word, the confinement is the inability to read and the life sentence is that imposed by an arbitrary judge—American Education. . . . After assessing the reading levels of juvenile inmates in twenty-four states, I found that clearly these youngsters are crippled in the most basic skill—reading. Their average age is fourteen, but their reading ability is approximately fourth-grade level. . . .

But the high illiteracy rate hardly tells the whole story. Literate inmates in correctional institutions tend to be heavier readers than the general public, and to read an amazing range of literature.

Reading Interests

"Since there are so few other diversions," says Daniel Suvak, former librarian at the maximum security Southern Ohio Correctional Facility at Lucasville, "a prison library is used about ten times as heavily as its counterpart 'on the streets' serving approximately the same population."

> The library at Lucasville means different things to its patrons. For residents involved in an ongoing, serious research topic with frequent use of inter-library loan, and for groups requiring special lectures on the literature of their field of interest, it most closely resembles an academic library.
>
> For staff members interested in current information in penology which is needed for problem solving and for "keeping up" in the field, it is a special library. For students in the education programs with required readings, papers and book reports, it is a school library. For the general population seeking light, diversionary reading or the satisfaction of curiosity, it is a public library. (*Ohio Library Bulletin*, October 1973)

Prison librarians report that inmates are interested not only in books concerning the backgrounds from which they have come, but also in books on poetry and writing, art, music, nationalism and revolution, Africa and China, philosophy and psychology, as well as Westerns, detective novels and science fiction. The warden of Allegheny County Jail in Pittsburgh expected that the inmates would like a library filled with light reading and was surprised when the residents requested textbooks for English and math, shop and car repair manuals, and Black literature (75 per cent of the population is Black). A reading interest survey of Texas inmates showed that importance was placed on the need for current information; inmates expressed a strong desire to read magazines and newspapers. Lesta Burt of the Library Science Department at Sam Houston

State University in Texas surveyed the male inmates at the Wisconsin State Reformatory at Fox Lake and discovered that they had "a phenomenal knowledge of world affairs."

A number of prison librarians suggest that inmates have the same desires for information and for recreational reading as the general public, but need the materials written for adults with a low educational level. One reported finding a high readership for low-vocabulary books and has stated that large-print books are in demand by both the visually handicapped and the slow reader. The needs and interests of prisoners, combined with below-average reading skills, demand a variety of media.

Wrote Lesta Burt in the Summer 1977 issue of *Library Trends*, "It is most important that the informational needs of inmates be met. If one believes in library service, one must believe that everyone should have the opportunity for it. There should be special concern that residents of correctional facilities be provided with the best possible service, because those on the 'inside' now will be on the 'outside' soon. Every means of assuring that inmates return to society as good citizens should be utilized."

In 1975 Brenda Vogel, Library Coordinator for the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, conducted a survey of the information needs of prisoners in seven Maryland institutions. The needs identified by the study in order of their priority were as follows:

1. In-house information on institutional procedures, regulations, current happenings, etc.;
2. Information concerning families, and community resource information for family assistance;
3. Legal information concerning criminal charges, appeals, etc.; and
4. Job market information and other re-entry information.

Increased Service

Each year the number of states with statewide arrangements for cooperation between public libraries and correctional institutions grows. In Washington, Idaho, Montana and Illinois all

services are provided by outside library agencies. In New York, Nebraska, Connecticut and many other states, institutional library programs are supplemented through statewide reference and interlibrary loan networks. In California, interlibrary cooperation varies from one area of the state to another. With LSCA funds, the New Jersey State Library has been providing literacy tutoring workshops in all state correctional facilities since 1977; inmates are trained to tutor other inmates.

Each major correctional institution in Wisconsin has a library staffed by a professional librarian, although the Institutional Services Librarian admits that these libraries are usually inadequate. The Wisconsin State Library's Reference and Loan Library provides an Institutional Services backup program for these prison libraries: it fills requests for individual books, answers reference questions and handles non-credit reading courses. The service does a big business in supplying specialized library materials needed for inmates enrolled in extension courses. Specially prepared reading courses are also popular.

Pretrial Detention

"Of all the possible relationships which may exist between correctional facilities and public libraries," wrote Jane Pool in *Library Trends*, "no relationship appears more logical, more feasible, than that between public libraries and county and city jails."

Local jails have long been recognized as the most neglected and the most damaging "correctional" institutions in the country in terms of human and social costs. They have been neglected on the theory that they are pretrial detention centers with short-term stays—although average stays of six months to a year are the norm. Conditions tend to be chronically overcrowded. Unlike penitentiary inmates, residents do not have jobs to perform and, except for short exercise periods, are confined to the crowded and tedious life of a group tank. Jail officials, whose primary concern is security, often simply do

not want to be bothered coping with outside services, and many turn down offers of library service.

Librarians have found that a large measure of ingenuity is their chief mainstay in providing jailhouse library service: librarians must set aside their penchant for building balanced collections and keeping accurate records, and must focus instead on the job of helping to constructively fill the time-heavy days of persons who are confined, worried and under-educated. Furthermore, they must do this within the administrative structure of the individual jail. Librarians have had to learn that security will always be the first priority of the jail administration (hardcover books are considered potential weapons). Not only must their plans recognize this priority: they must communicate this understanding to the administration from the beginning, to minimize opposition to their proposals.

A common obstacle to library service at city and county jails is the lack of a suitable room in the jail. Thus, book service to jails typically is restricted to a book-cart operation. Recognizing the psychological importance of giving inmates an opportunity to browse and select at will—perhaps the only choice they will encounter while in jail—public librarians have managed to come up with a variety of solutions: a wall in a dining room covered with wire baskets to hold paperbacks; a range of shelves at the head of a stairway leading to the cell blocks (each week inmates are allowed to make phone calls in the hallway where the collection is located—while waiting to use the phone, they can browse through the collection and borrow and return books); a converted cell in Montgomery County (Pa.) Prison transformed into a law library.

At the Brooklyn House of Detention, space has been made for a library which is a microcosm of what might be found in a small branch library. The staff of the Brooklyn Public Library, which runs the library, feels that exposure to library facilities encourages inmates to continue to visit their local libraries when they leave the Brooklyn House of Detention. Posters displayed in the jail library advertise other services of the Brooklyn Public Library, such as the Job Information and Learn Your Way centers.

Since 1973 the Chicago Public Library has been providing li-

brary service to inmates of the Cook County Correctional Complex, believed to be the largest jail in the United States, with 4,200 inmates at one location. The inmates of the institution are mostly young black males with a low reading level. The majority of them are waiting for their trial and have not yet been convicted. They have to wait in jail because they could not afford to post bond, which in many cases involves as little as $100 in cash.

Cook County's jail was once known as among the most brutal and oppressive correctional institutions in the United States, but drastic measures were taken several years ago to improve conditions. Four new divisions were built and new correctional officers were hired. The Clarence Darrow Library was built into one of the new buildings and it is "unquestionably the nicest spot in the entire institution," says David D. Smith, head of the Correctional Services Library Program. It provides the only walk-in library service in the county's complex of correctional facilities. The collection for the library was painstakingly built, based on a survey of the reading interests of inmates and correctional officers. Special emphasis was placed on popular fiction, young adult classics, standard classics (such as Shakespeare), Black literature and crime-related literature. Subscriptions to 140 varied periodicals are maintained. Two Latino librarians assisted in the selection of Spanish-language materials.

When the Tulsa Public Library Adult Independent Learner Service was announced in the Tulsa newspapers in September 1974, one of the first inquiries came from the parents of a young man serving time in the Tulsa County Jail. He wanted to study for the GED (high school equivalency) exam. Although the Tulsa library had a monthly paperback book delivery service to the jail, materials such as those necessary for GED preparation could not be included. After a year of discussions with the sheriff and his staff, learners' advisers were allowed into the jail to work with male trusties interested in GED certification, as long as all materials used were soft-covered. The service has since been expanded to include inmates in the women's division as well. Librarian LaRena Williams and an assistant spend two hours once a week with

the learners at the jail, working with groups of six inmates at a time. Ms. Williams has also worked with inmates who want to improve their reading, spelling or grammar; write better poetry; or learn shorthand.

Ms. Williams feels that the three-year-old program has finally won the acceptance and trust of the jail authorities. "It's the greatest thing going here," the sheriff tells her.

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One is struck by the creativity and determination shown by librarians in all parts of the country in providing library services to users with special needs. It is inspiring and at the same time frustrating. Why are not these services uniformly available everywhere they are needed? Why are some communities "more equal" than others in the delivery of library services? Why are so many citizens—often those with the most to gain—denied access to library and information resources?

There can be only one long-term answer: a national program to ensure adequate funds to provide these special services *in addition to* adequate library services for the general population.

As they have for newly arrived immigrants from foreign shores for many generations, public libraries can supply needed information, literacy, guidance and self-assurance to those who are at the bottom end of the economic and educational ladder. Innovative librarians and creative community leaders have already shown the way. The challenge for the rest of us is to fashion a lasting program.